



## Migration Profile

### MALI

#### A. Executive Summary

Migration in Mali is deep-rooted. The geographical position of the country has historically placed it at the intersection of the major trade routes between the Maghreb to the north and sub-Saharan African countries to the south. Mobility was essential for trade in products (salt, livestock, and gold) and slaves. The Malian climate led to age-old migratory patterns, as pastoral and agricultural populations disproportionate to water accessibility needed to move in search of new water sources. Extensive agriculture, nomadism, and transhumance are historical practices in Mali. The Kayes region has long practised regular seasonal mobility. The colonisation of the country by France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was also a powerful factor of displacement, driving the need for labour for the construction of infrastructure. Then came the demand for workers in the ports, forced migration from the border areas with Côte d'Ivoire (especially to Sikasso region, Mali), and demand for labour in coastal and forest areas for the cultivation of coffee and cocoa. These historical migration patterns created favourable conditions for migration after independence in 1960. In the 1960s and 1970s many Malians began to leave for France to meet the demand for labour there, mainly coming from Kayes. Today Mali is still impacted by these historical phenomena. It is mainly a country of emigration and transit migration.

Mali suffers from a number of environmental challenges, including desertification, drought, increasing deforestation, soil erosion, inadequate supplies of potable water, and flooding of the Niger River in the rainy season. There is also a long history of tensions between different communities in central Mali over access to land and water which are exacerbated by climate change. Since the beginning of the war in 2012, involving conflict between ethnic Tuaregs from the northern region, Islamist groups, and the Malian army, there has been ongoing low-level fighting in central and northern Mali, despite the 2015 Algiers Accord. Ethnic self-defence militias, jihadists, and army soldiers conduct raids to kill each other and civilians, burning villages and stealing cattle. During 2018 at least 300 civilians were killed in central and northern Mali. Humanitarian agencies and peace workers are often attacked by bandits and have limited access to villages, where Islamist armed groups are imposing Sharia law. Children are particularly affected by the violence. Some are found killed or go missing, and thousands of children suffer from malnutrition due to conflict and inter-communal violence. As of February 2018, 225,000 children were denied the right to education because of insecurity and displacement. In 2018 and 2019 the protection

environment of Mali continued to deteriorate in the central and northern regions of the country following the resurgence of community tensions and armed insurgencies. On 18 August 2020, military forces organized a coup leading to the resignation of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta. An interim government of 18 months was established on 25 September 2020, led by Bah Ndaw, Mali's former defence minister. Colonel Assimi Goita, leader of the National Committee for the Salvation of the People (CNSP), which overthrew the former president, was appointed as Vice President.

## **B. Country Profile**

### **I. Basic Information**

Mali is the eighth largest nation in Africa, with a landlocked territory of 1,220,190 km<sup>2</sup> bordered by Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, the Niger, and Algeria. The country has three natural zones: the northern arid Saharan and central semiarid Saharan zones, comprising 65% of the territory, and the southern cultivated zone, comprising the 35% on which the bulk of the population resides.

There are around 19.97M inhabitants in Mali (June 2019 est.), making it the 62<sup>nd</sup> most populated country in the world. 74% of the population lives in rural areas. The population is rapidly increasing, with a growth rate of 3.02%. Mali's total population is expected to double by 2035; its capital, Bamako, is one of the fastest-growing cities in Africa. The population is composed of a number of ethnic groups: Bambara (34.1%), Peul (14.7%), Sarakoke (10.8%), Senuto (10.5%), Dogon (8.9%) and Malinke (8.7%). The official language of Mali is French, but African languages are mainly used by the various ethnic groups. The predominant language spoken is Bambara (51.5%), followed by Peul (8.3%), Dogon (6.6%), Maraka (5.7%), Sonrhäi (5.3%), Malinké (5.2%), Manianka (3.8%), Tamacheq (3.2%), Sénoufo (2%), Bobo (1.9%), Bozo (1.6%), Kassonké (1.1%), and Maure (1%). The majority of Malians are Muslims (94.6%). A small percentage of the population practices folk religions (2.5%) and Christianity (2.4%). Amongst Christians, 60% are Catholics and 34% Protestants as of 2020. The Catholic population has been slightly increasing, from 211,000 people in 2000 to 280,000 in 2020.

Unemployment afflicts 9.6% of the population and 15.4% of people between 15 and 39 years of age. In 2019 42.1% of people were living below the national poverty line, which is a noticeable fall from 2015 (47.2%). Poverty is concentrated in the rural areas of southern Mali where the population density is the highest (90%). 22.8% of households lack electricity and 31.5% lacks potable water. 61.1% of people 6 years old or above don't have an education. Mali's Human Development Index (HDI) is 188 – the 179<sup>th</sup> in the world.

### **II. International and Internal Migrants**

The Malian population is itself highly mobile, both internally and internationally. According to the Institut National de la Statistique (INSTAT), 6.1% of people questioned in 2019 claimed to have settled in their current locale only after living elsewhere. Mobility in urban areas (13.7%) is higher than in rural areas (3.4%). It is also higher for men (6.3%) than for women (5.8%). The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Mali observed 11,897 migrants at Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) during 1-31 August 2020: 7,034 were incoming and 4,863

outgoing. 68% of migrants reported long-term migration (more than six months), while 31% moved for seasonal work. The majority of female migrants are driven by family reunification, but more and more are leaving their homes in search of a job or to escape conflict or forced marriages.

Mali hosts 468,200 international migrants (2.4% of pop.) of which 49.3% are women and 3.8% are refugees (2019 est.). The median age of international migrants is 31.6. 21.3% are under 19, 74.8% between 20 and 64, and 3.9% 65 and older. 91.1% of international migrants in Mali come from sub-Saharan Africa. According to the IOM Flow Monitoring Report from August 2020, 70% of recorded migrants at FMPs in Mali come from Burkina Faso (59%), Guinea-Conakry (7%), Côte d'Ivoire (2%) and Nigeria (2%). Only 18% of migrants recorded were coming from within Mali. After leaving the FMPs, most migrants were going to Burkina Faso (25%), Algeria (4%), Mauritania (3%), or staying in Mali (67%). From September 2019 to September 2020 the IOM recorded an increasing number of migrants wishing to travel to Europe through Algeria and Mauritania.

Mali is an important transit country for migrants from other parts of West Africa, especially from Guinea (40%), Senegal (15%) and Gambia (12%) (est. 2016). Most migrants travel through Bamako to the towns of Gao and Timbuktu, as well as through border areas such as Benena, Gogui and Heremakono, before they head towards Algeria, the Niger, Libya, Mauritania or Morocco, and then, perhaps, make the perilous journey to Europe (in 2015, the fatality rate of Malians crossing the Mediterranean Sea was 6%). Gao is an important transit point and is commonly favoured by migrants for its accessibility to routes leading to the Mediterranean Sea. The majority of outgoing migrants identified at the Gao and Timbuktu FMPs continue through Algeria. Migrants transiting through Benena and Heremakono travel on to Burkina Faso, while those transiting through Gogui travel on to Mauritania. Mali is also a transit country for incoming migrants, notably those who were unable to cross the Sahara Desert and those returning to countries such as Guinea-Conakry, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Starting in mid-March 2020 a progressive decrease in migratory flows was observed at the different FMPs of Mali due to Covid-19 restrictions and the closure of borders, reaching the lowest level in April 2020. However, resumption in the movement of migrants was observed in May and June. Mali's FMPs recorded an increase in flows of 32% in May and of 100% in June 2020, reaching a higher volume of flows than before the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **III. Emigration and Skilled Migration**

In 2019 25.3% of households reported having members living outside their locality, of which 12.4% had exclusively internal, 9.1% exclusively international, and 3.3% both internal and international migrants. 27.9% of rural households and 19.3% of urban households had members outside their locality. Some regions are more affected than others: 50% of Kayes's households reported a migrant member, whereas only 2.1% of Kidal's households did the same. Emigrants from Mali come mainly from Kayes (38% of Malian emigrants) even though Kayes only represents 14% of the total Malian population (2016 est.). Other origin regions for

emigrants are Sikasso (27%), Koulikono (12%), Mopti (9%), Ségou (2%), Timbuktu (2%) and Gao Kidal (2%).

The main destinations for Malian emigrants are Côte d'Ivoire (31.6%), Burkina Faso-Mauritania-Niger-Senegal (12.9%), France (8.5%), other countries in Europe (8.4%), Gabon (6.2%), Libya (2.5%) and other African countries (27.8%). 81% of emigrants move to other African countries. In recent years emigration is increasingly towards African countries that do not border Mali, especially those in Central Africa (Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Equatorial Guinea). Between 2011 and 2016 there has been a decrease in emigration flows to France. Within the European Union 69% of Malian international migrants are in France, 23% in Spain, and 7% in Italy.

Migration in Mali is a constitutive feature of the economic and social life. It allows social and economic emancipation as well as diversification of sources of income and insurance in case of climatic hazards thanks to remittances. Around 10% of Mali's inhabitants (1.8M) were receiving money transfers from abroad in 2016, contributing a total of 7% to Mali's GDP (est. 2015). Kayes represented 48% of these transfers, and households in Kayes are the most dependent on remittances. Money transfers from outside Mali represented 43.1M F CFA in 2019, with 17.6M F CFA coming from France. Remittances contribute to reducing poverty in Mali, but they also increase existing inequalities as mainly the richest quintile of households benefit from transfers. Emigration is ranked fifth of the principal coping strategies for households with food insecurity, with 7.4% of households in Mali using this coping strategy, including 9.1% of households in rural areas.

#### **IV. Forced Migration (internally displaced, asylum seekers and refugees)**

As of July 2020, there are 287,469 internally displaced people (IDPs) in Mali, 141,676 Malian refugees in neighbouring countries, and 84,383 repatriated refugees. An increase of 8% of displaced people was registered from June to July 2020, as security conditions were aggravated in Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao and Ménaka. There has been a steady increase of displaced people since February 2019. The reported reasons for Malian refugees and IDPs to move are armed conflict (46%), inter-communal violence (51%), and natural disaster (1%).

54% of Mali's IDPs are women and 46% are men. 58% are under 18 and 3% are over 60 years old. IDPs have good (84%) or very good (13%) relations with host communities. IDP households mainly live on aid or donations (49%) and community or third-person support (30%). In its Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) report from July 2020, the IOM evaluated several IDP sites showing very inferior living conditions. They found that 2% of IDPs were homeless, mainly in Bourem, Bankass, Gourma-Rharous, Mopti, Gao and Goundam. 50% of evaluated sites were without functional latrines. There were problems with access to potable water for 32% of IDPs in Bourem, 25% in Mopti, 14% in Goundam, and 10% in Gao. Diseases were frequent, including malaria (in 37% of sites), malnutrition (30%), fever (16%), and diarrhoea (11%). Due to Covid-19, 50 out of 146 sites could not access medical assistance, and 37 sites did not have any medical services. In 50% of the sites children were not going to school because there was no existing school (31%), schools were closed (29%), there was a lack of financial means (23%), or the school was too far away (11%).

Malian refugees, many of Tuareg ethnicity, are found in the neighbouring countries of Mauritania (62,980 refugees, 44.5%), the Niger (59,232 refugees, 41.8%), and Burkina Faso (19,464 refugees, 13.7%). Asylum seekers and refugees mainly stay along the borders, despite encouragement from the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to move to safer locations within the host countries. Most of them are found in rural areas in settlements and the refugee camps run by the UNHCR, such as M'bera (Mauritania), Goudoubo and Mentao (Burkani Faso), and Abala, Mangaize and Tabareybarey (the Niger).

Malian refugees and IDPs have problems accessing food, healthcare, and clean water. Malian refugees are often unable to find the necessary protection in the Niger and Burkina Faso as insecurity is spreading across the Sahel region, targeting more and more civilians, while exploiting underlying social tensions. Humanitarian and peace-making activities are compromised by attacks on humanitarian convoys, kidnappings, and killings. As of June 2019 the situation was more stable on the Mauritanian side.

There were 136,000 refugees in Mali in 2016, coming from Mauritania, the Central African Republic and Cote d'Ivoire. In June 2019, the UNHCR recorded 8,457 Burkinabe refugees in Mali. A number of refugees are in the urban areas of Timbuktu and Goa, whereas IDPs are spread among the cities of Bamako, Mopti and Timbuktu, and in the Western regions of Kidal and Gao.

## **V. Victims of Human Trafficking**

Mali is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. The Government of Mali was downgraded to Tier Two in 2020 by the United States Department of State Watch List due to "decreased efforts to identify and protect trafficking victims" in comparison to the previous year. The authorities identified 64 sex trafficking victims and 106 potential victims, but as Mali doesn't have standardised mechanisms to identify trafficking victims, the data probably flawed. At least 215 children were identified as being associated with armed groups in 2020. The Fodé and Yeguine Network for Action (RAFY) assisted 106 trafficking victims, including 28 foreign national children (8 girls and 20 boys) and 64 foreign national adults (10 women and 54 men). They were from Pakistan (18), Bangladesh (9), India (8), Sri Lanka (3), Sudan (5), Cameroon (2), and other West African countries (19). Africans transiting from Mali to Europe, primarily via Algeria and Libya, and less so, Mauritania, are vulnerable to trafficking.

Internal trafficking is more prevalent than transnational trafficking. Humanitarian actors report that high unemployment, food insecurity, and security threats drive some families to sell their children into domestic servitude or forced labour in gold mines. Some members of Mali's Tuareg community are subjected to slavery practices rooted in traditional relationships of hereditary servitude, a form of slavery that was only prosecuted for the first time in 2020.

Women and girls are forced into domestic servitude, agricultural labour, and support roles in artisanal gold mines, but mainly subjected to sex trafficking, which is the most prevalent form of trafficking in Mali. Women and girls from Nigeria, Benin, Burkina Faso and Guinea are recruited with promises of jobs in the service sector but are instead exploited in sex

trafficking throughout Mali, including in Chinese-run hotels in Bamako and small mining communities such as the artisanal mine of Kangala. In 2019 an estimated 20,000 Nigerian women and girls were being forced into prostitution in Mali. Many sex trafficking victims reported suffering from mental health problems and trauma. Identification and support for these victims is insufficient; there is only one shelter available for them in Bamako. Malian women and girls are victims of sex trafficking in Gabon, Libya, Lebanon, and Tunisia and domestic servitude in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Tunisia.

Boys from Mali, Guinea, and Burkina Faso are subjected to various forms of forced labour including agriculture, mining, domestic work, transportation, begging, and work in the informal commercial sector. Men and boys, primarily of Songhai ethnicity, are subjected to a long-standing practice of debt bondage in the salt mines of Taoudeni in northern Mali. Corrupt Quranic teachers also coerce and force Malian boys to beg or perform agricultural work in neighbouring countries including Senegal, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire.

In 2019 the IOM and the Government of Mali launched a two-year *Safety, Support, and Solution* program in Mali and in other West and Central African countries. Services for victims varied by location but generally included shelter, food, counselling, vocational training, repatriation, and reintegration assistance, mainly provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These services are insufficient and inadequate. Shelters and other services for victims outside the capital remained limited, especially in the North. Foreign and domestic victims received the same services, and while some facilities could offer specialised services for females, there were no such services for males.

## **VI. National Legal Framework**

The main national laws about migration in Mali include the 1995 Law modifying Malian nationality to allow Malians to have dual nationality for better integration in their host countries; the 2004 Law on the conditions of entry, residence, and establishment of foreigners, and its implementing decree; and the 2012-2013 Law Relating to the Combat against Trafficking in Persons and Similar Practices which criminalized sex and labour trafficking. Mali also established the 2018-2022 National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and allocated 200M F CFA (\$351,710) for anti-trafficking efforts. As of 2019 law enforcement continued to lack resources and understanding of human trafficking, which impeded their efforts.

The Republic of Mali is a state party to the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (ratified in 1973); the 2000 UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, including its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and its Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air (signatory: 2000; ratification: 2002); the 1954 UN Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (accession in 2016); and the 1961 UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (accession in 2016). Mali is also a state party to 15 International Human Rights treaties, including the 1990 International Convention of the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ratified in 2003). Mali voted for the endorsement of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly

and Regular Migration (GCM) on 19 December 2018.

Mali is also a party to regional conventions, including the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (ratified in 1981); the 2018 Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African economic community relating to free movement of persons, right of residence, and right of establishment (ratified in 2019); and the 2009 African Union Convention (Kampala Convention) for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (ratified in 2012). It also entered bilateral agreements with France, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, the Niger, Cameroon, Libya and Spain. According to a 2020 report on citizenship law in Mali, “Mali lacks key protections against statelessness, such as a clause ensuring that children born in Mali who would otherwise be stateless receive nationality”. Many problems are linked with the 2011 Personal and Family Code (CPR) which allows children to remain without nationality until they reach majority. This is the case, for example, of children whose birth in Mali is not proven or children born in Mali whose parents' nationality is not proven (arts. 224-226). Mali's problems associated with statelessness include the lack of training and motivation of officials, the lack of resources, poor preservation of archives, lack of law enforcement decrees, corruption, lack of judicial control of the civil status file, and lack of public information on the importance of registration etc.

## **VII. Main Actors**

### *The State*

The main administrative actor in charge of migration management is the Ministry of Malians Abroad and African Integration (MMEIA). Its Ministerial Department in Charge of the Management of the Diaspora is responsible for the implementation of policies aimed at ensuring the participation of expatriate Malians in the country's further development and the facilitation of their socio-economic reintegration when they return, the protection of Malians living abroad and the defence of their interests, and the implementation, in liaison with the ministries concerned, of the national African integration policy. The MMEIA includes the General Delegation of Malians (DGME), created in 2000, whose mission is to draw up the elements of the national policy on the administration, assistance, protection and promotion of Malians living abroad and to ensure the coordination and control of diplomatic and consular missions that contribute to the implementation of this policy. It also includes the Migration Information and Management Centre (CIGEM), whose missions are to improve knowledge of migratory phenomena, to welcome, inform, guide and accompany potential and returning migrants, to provide information on the legal conditions of migration and raise public awareness to prevent irregular migration, and to develop the human, financial and technical capital of Malians abroad. The MMEIA's activities suffer from many problems: insufficient financial and human resources, lack of logistical resources, and the need for ongoing staff training.

Other administrations concerned with migration are the National Population Directorate (DNP), created in 2004, which is part of the Ministry of Planning and Territorial Development and whose mission is to develop the elements of the national population policy

(including migration); the National Employment Agency (ANPE), created in 2004, which includes the Employment and Training Observatory Department (DOEF); the National Directorate of Statistics and Informatics (DNSI), in charge of the census and national surveys; and the Directorate of Legal Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, created in 2000, in charge of international treaties and agreements, including those concerning migration.

The High Council of Malians Living Abroad (HCME) was created in 1991 with the goal to help maintain solidarity between Malians living abroad and to involve the Malian diaspora in the development of the country.

### *The Catholic Church*

The Catholic Church in Mali is composed of one Archdiocese and five dioceses: the Archdiocese of Bamako, and the Dioceses of Kayes, de Mopti, San, Ségou, and Sikasso.

Caritas Mali – or Association Secours Catholique Malien (SECAMA) – was created in 1959 and recognised in 1973. The areas of intervention of Caritas Mali are focused on social charity in accordance with the social-economic development plans of Mali’s authorities. They include agriculture, livestock and fisheries, hydraulics, environment, education, health, culture, humanitarian aid and emergency relief, gender and development, justice and peace, and communication (animation, mass media). Between 2 and 4 October 2020, Caritas Mali ran a workshop on migration, gathering, amongst others, representatives of diocesan Caritas, the Ministry of Malians Abroad and African Integration (MMEIA), and the High Council of Malians Living Abroad (HCME).

The Catholic Relief Services (CSR) are also involved in Mali. CSR addresses the needs of vulnerable populations, including internally displaced people. With support from the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and Office of Food for Peace, CRS has been working to provide lifesaving assistance like food, water, and shelter to displaced people in Mali. In addition, the Mali Missions Project is working on issues such as immigration, diplomacy, evangelism and autonomy.

Finally, to address the increasing number of youths forced to migrate - both inside and outside national borders - and are falling into the risk of being exploited and becoming victims of human trafficking, the Jesuit community has established the Social Centre, Djoliba. Aiming to promote peace, ethical leadership, and the social teaching of the Church in the perspective of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, the Centre prepares the youth to become leaders of justice and peace.

### *International Organisations*

In Mali’s conflict, the key international actors are the United Nations, handling rule of law and political stability; France and the United States, responsible for military matters, most notably Operation Barkhane; the EU, in charge of training and security sector reform; and the 2017 G5 Sahel, a multinational counterterrorism military force composed of Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, the Niger, Chad.

The IOM has a national office in Bamako and four regional offices in Timbuktu, Kayes, Gao and Mopti. The IOM's key actions in Mali are the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Programme; protection assistance through psychosocial support and referral of those in need to specialised agents; operational protection for the identification, assistance and referral of the most vulnerable people on the move throughout the country; emergency assistance for shelter and non-food items; and the delivery of basic health care services as well as clean water and sanitation facilities. In 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the IOM facilitated the return of 84 migrants from Algeria to Mali. It also participated in an EU-IOM joint initiative for the protection and reintegration of migrants which provided reintegration assistance, protection and return assistance, capacity building for governments and local actors, data collection, and analysis. In 2019 they assisted the voluntary return of more than 12,000 Malians. IOM also organises training sessions for law enforcement officers.

The UNHCR is operating in Mali with a budget of USD 48M for 2020. The UNHCR has a Country Office in Bamako, a Sub-Office in Gao, and two Field Offices in Mopti and Timbuktu. The UNHCR is running camps for refugees and internally displaced persons in Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso and the Niger, working on implementing the Kampala Convention, helping with voluntary repatriation and reintegration, and training authorities on international protection and non-refoulement in collaboration with the National Commission in Charge of Refugees (CNCR). For the 2019-2020 school year they registered 1,100 refugee children in school and financially supported 600 families. On 11 and 12 April 2019, a Tripartite meeting was organised in Niamey between the Government of Mali and the UNHCR regarding the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees. They stated their intention not to promote voluntary repatriation, while continuing to provide assistance to those who choose to return to Mali.

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